

# QVH NEWS

## Winter 2017/18

The newsletter of Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

## Surgery gives Dad his hand back



*Pictures from South West News Service*

**Dad of three Jeremy Payton feared he'd be disabled for life after severing the fingers on his right hand in an industrial accident. Unfortunately Jeremy's fingers couldn't be successfully saved so he underwent pioneering surgery here at Queen Victoria Hospital to rebuild his hand.**

Jeremy explained: "When the accident happened I didn't realise how serious it was until I saw my fingers were gone. I initially thought I'd just taken some skin off."

He was offered life-changing surgery which would replace his missing fingers with his toes.



*"Jeremy was an unusual case for QVH – in fact there have been no other cases requiring extensive reconstruction of this sort after amputation of all digits on one hand. Toe implants are most commonly performed to help children born with missing fingers, rather than adults who have been injured. Through surgery we can help restore function and improve their quality of life."*

Mark Pickford, consultant plastic surgeon at the Queen Victoria Hospital

"The surgery sounded really weird when they explained it - I couldn't get my head around it until I spoke to a young lad who'd lost his thumb in a forestry accident," said Jeremy. "He showed me they'd taken his toe off and sewn it on to his hand. You need your thumbs, otherwise no matter how many fingers you've got, you can't pick anything up."

In a series of operations over the course of a year, the second and third toes from Jeremy's right foot were removed and transplanted, and the big toe from his left foot was used to replace his thumb. The surgery created a new hand for Jeremy and gave him the ability to regain basic dexterity. He now drives a manual car and has even improved his golf handicap!

Jeremy explained: "I can't thank Mr Pickford and his team enough. Without the operation and numerous follow-up appointments I'd be struggling physically and mentally."



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*Picture of Niamh reproduced with kind permission of Sarah Weal and Gilli Davidson.*

# Giving the gift of sight

**Did you know we were the first hospital in the country to set up an eye bank? It's a facility that stores and screens donated eye tissue which our team can use in sight saving operations. But our facility couldn't exist without people from across the south east choosing to donate their corneas when they die.**

We carry out around 250 cornea transplants a year here at QVH and, as our consultant ophthalmic surgeon Damian Lake explains, "there's a recognised national shortage of people donating their corneas after they die. It's a myth that if your organs are not suitable for donation you can't donate your corneas, in fact your corneas are the part of your body you are most likely to be able to donate."

Our team work with great care to preserve the appearance and dignity of the deceased person and will take the time needed to talk to the next of kin about donation.

We are encouraging people to have the conversation about organ and tissue donation with their families now. We know first-hand that it's a life-changing gift, as Gilli Davidson explains.

When Gilli's nine year old daughter Niamh died from a rare kidney cancer, her family let the funeral director know they wanted to donate her eyes; a gift which went on to save the sight of two young people, thanks to our team.

Gilli explains: "Too often people registering for organ donation tick the box that excludes their eyes. Maybe there is a squeamishness about eyes or maybe it is because they are a part of how we connect with people. I think if we can let go of those worries, it would mean our death or that of a loved one, can make a difference. For us it was a way to make a positive out of the worst thing that's ever happened to me."

## Facts about cornea donation

- The cornea is the clear tissue at the front of your eye that lets in light so you can see
- It provides up to 75 per cent of our ability to focus. It also protects our eyeballs from dirt, dust and germs and filters some of the sun's damaging ultraviolet waves.
- The cornea can scar after infections, and disease or injury, causing loss of vision. Age and inherited conditions can lead to a cloudy cornea too. Any of these could mean the need for a cornea transplant.
- The sooner the eyes are retrieved the better the transplant outcome, but your corneas can be donated up to 24 hours after you die.



# Incredible prosthetics

### Did you know the prosthetic service at QVH is the largest of its type in the UK?

Our expert team produce artificial ears, noses, eyes and even whole sections of faces, each lovingly crafted for a perfect match. These are used to restore the appearance of patients after head and neck cancer surgery and to repair damage from major accidents and burns. Prostheses are also used to treat those born without an ear, eye or a section of their jaw or face.

Every person is unique and the team spend many days working with each patient to make sure we give them what they need. It's not just about what people look like but about some of the functions we may take for granted in daily life, like being able to speak clearly or eat and drink with dignity.

Using the latest 3D technologies, our onsite maxillofacial team will soon be able to design and manufacture surgical models and implant guides for osteotomy surgery, as well as models on which to fabricate titanium skull plates to protect the brain after surgery or trauma to the skull.

**More exciting things to come!**



## My story: Colin Fry

**Colin Fry cheerfully says "The day I came to Queen Victoria Hospital was the best day. I met a wonderful, professional, understanding doctor who explained all the options to me. That set the tone for how it would all be – great expertise, amazing rapport, super modern theatres and equipment."**

Colin was initially seeking treatment for a throat problem, but a doctor spotted a sore patch on his nose, and tests showed that he had cancer. Colin was referred to QVH for a rhinectomy, the surgical removal of his entire nose, and the creation of an artificial nose.

"Everybody at QVH works together as a real team. The reception staff, the nurses, the psychologist, the speech therapist, the surgeons and the anaesthetist ... I couldn't believe how many people were involved in my care and they all put me at my ease. Every person explained what they were there for and everything worked like clockwork.

"Before my nose was removed the head of prosthetics showed me samples and explained what would happen. I went home from surgery with a huge bandage, then for six months I had a stuck on nose while my scars healed. Now my nose is supported by titanium rods built into my skull and it is a perfect match for the nose I had before, a real work of art. Sarah in prosthetics will make me a new nose if I ever need it; it is a wonderful, very personal service."

What could the hospital have done better? "Nothing. Please don't change QVH – it is a very special place."



## Your hospital

*Sarah Gillett, manager of The Bookshop and originator of this thoughtful project.*



## Brown paper packages tied up with strings

**Local booklovers have been providing an unusual treat for some of our longer staying patients thanks to a scheme run by East Grinstead's 'The Bookshop'.**

This quintessentially English shop asked its customers to consider purchasing a new book for a stranger, someone unable to come in themselves. Staff at the shop then beautifully wrapped each donation in brown paper, complete with luggage label and string, writing four clues on the front of each hinting at what the title might be. Some customers even specially ordered in titles they knew they would want to read if ever in hospital.

The mystery packages with crisp, new books inside have brought great pleasure to our patients.

## Our local community

**At Queen Victoria Hospital we're lucky to have strong support from our local community. From knitting 'twiddlemuffs' to reduce the anxiety of patients with dementia, to providing kits with toothbrush and other essentials for people expectedly staying in hospital overnight, the people of East Grinstead and surrounding areas are always ready to help us.**

Thank you to everybody who supports us, whether locally or from further afield. Your donations, generous feedback, pride in the hospital's heritage and the ways you make our staff so welcome in the community make a very real difference.

## Patient feedback

**We love hearing from our patients. This is what one mum shared on our Facebook page about her family's experience of our hospital:**

"Thank you to all staff who beautifully looked after my son on his 8th birthday following a tragic injury. They went the extra mile last year to make sure he was ok and made both of us cry when they sang happy birthday following his surgery. My boy was so happy to be able to watch his favourite film in the play room. So much love for this place, thank you x"

## Get in touch

We'd love to hear your stories about what QVH means to you. You can contact us via:

 [QueenVictoriaHospital](#)

 [@QVH](#)

 [Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)

 [@QVHNHS](#)

 [@QueenVictoriaHospital](#)

 [www.qvh.nhs.uk](#)

 [info@qvh.nhs.uk](mailto:info@qvh.nhs.uk)



# Rebuilding lives

## Last year staff in the x-ray department asked for some bones!

QVH Charity, which supports the Queen Victoria Hospital's ground-breaking work in reconstructive surgery and burns care, was able to help. As the team explained on their application to the charity "the internet and books are useful tools but there is nothing better than getting your hands on the bones to have a true appreciation of the three-dimensionality and quiriness of bones."

QVH Charity was able to pay for an arm and a leg, so that the imaging team can look at a flat, 2D x-ray at the same time as handling a set of bones to help think about what the image could be showing. The bones are very popular in training sessions too, where the team can look at subtle concavities in finger bones and finer details like that.

Examples of other projects recently funded by the charity include a paediatric simulation mannequin which allows staff to practice emergency procedures for children coming in for our specialist care. The charity is also funding the refurbishment of the emergency burns assessment clinic to provide more comfort and privacy for patients.



## How to give

You can donate online through [www.justgiving.com/qvh-nhs](http://www.justgiving.com/qvh-nhs)

Or by cheque, payable to 'QVH NHS FT Charitable Fund'.

Send to QVH Charity, Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust,  
Holtye Road, East Grinstead, RH19 3DZ.



# Celebrating our stars

**When we asked our patients (past and present) to nominate staff they felt went the extra mile for them during their treatment or appointments, we were overwhelmed with the response. Each year we award an 'outstanding patient experience' prize to a member of our staff, nominated by the public, and this year received the most nominations ever!**

With so many wonderful stories from patients we couldn't have just one prize, so we were delighted to have joint winners. Well done to our staff nurse, Lorraine Loosley (above left) and consultant plastic surgeon, Tania Cubison (above right).

Tania's nominee said she had "changed my life" following an operation at the hospital. "She put me at ease and was very accommodating. She had an excellent bedside manner, always with a smile on her face."

Whilst Lorraine was described by her nominee as "my real life Florence Nightingale" after the care and treatment she gave a patient in the hospital's dressing clinic.

Speaking about winning the award Tania said: "Patients are the focus of all we do and to receive such positive feedback makes it all worthwhile. I was delighted to receive this award and have been really touched by the reaction of other staff to the announcement."

This was echoed by Lorraine who said: "It's nice to be recognised for what I see as just doing my job. To be nominated made me feel proud; however to win exceeded my expectations."